

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 03563 041533Z

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SUBJ: ALTO ADIGE SPOKESMAN THREATENS SECESSION IF COMMUNISTS
COME TO POWER

1. SUMMARY. THE NATIONAL DAILY CORRIERE DELLA SERA, IN AN ARTICLE ON MARCH 2, REPORTED "THE RETURN OF THE SPECTRE OF SEPARATISM" IN THE ALTO ADIGE REGION. THE ARTICLE IS BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR PETER BRUGGER OF THE SOUTH TYROL PEOPLE'S PARTY (SVP) WHO ASSERTED THAT THE ASSUMPTION OF NATIONAL POWER BY THE COMMUNISTS WOULD RENDER INEVITABLE THE DESIRE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF THE ALTO ADIGE RESIDENTS. ON MARCH 3, CORRIERE REPORTED THE REACTIONS OF VARIOUS PARTIES. BRUGGER'S COMMENTS WERE DENOUNCED IN VARYING DEGREES OF SEVERITY BY COMMUNISTS, SOCIALIST AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC SPOKESMEN. THE SVP SPOKESMAN HEDGED, REFERRING TO THE UNQUESTIONABLE "POSITIVE REACTIONS" WHICH BRUGGER'S STATEMENTS HAD PROVOKED. END SUMMARY.

2. BASED ON RUMORS OF RESURGENCE OF ACTIVITY AMONG PROPONENTS

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OF THE ALTO ADIGE'S REATTACHMENT TO AUSTRIA, CORRIERE DELLA

SERA INTERVIEWED SENATOR PETER BRUGGER, LEADING FIGURE IN THE SOUTH TYROL PEOPLE'S PARTY (SVP) WHICH REPRESENTS THE GERMAN-SPEAKING ELEMENT OF THE SOUTH TYROL REGION. BRUGGER WAS REMINDED OF HIS STATEMENT, MADE FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS OF LAST JUNE 15, THAT HIS REGION WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER SECESSION WERE THE COMMUNISTS TO COME TO POWER NATIONALLY. HE SAID THAT, WHILE THE SITUATION HAD CHANGED TO THE EXTENT THAT PCI SECRETARY BERLINGUER HAS "CLEARLY DISAVOWED THE FORMATION OF A POPULAR FRONT, "THE HISTORICAL COMPROMISE IS AT THE THRESHOLD." BRUGGERHYDDED THAT "THE ENTRY OF THE PCI INTO THE GOVERNMENT IS INEVITABLE IF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, BY THE TIME OF THE NEXT ELECTIONS, ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE ELECTORATE THEIR ERNEST DETERMINATION TO COMBAT CORRUPTION AND POLITICAL CLIENTELISM."

3. HYPOTHESIZING THE CREATION OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE, BRUGGER STATED THAT "IF THE PCI ONE DAY TAKES OVER THE POWER, SHUNTING ASIDE THEIR DC PARTNER IN WHATEVER MANNER, I BELIEVE THAT THE DESIRE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION WOULD BE INEVITABLE." HE AVERRED THAT THERE COULD NOT BE "A SHADOW OF A DOUBT" THAT HIS POINT OF VIEW WOULD PREVAIL IN ANY ALTO ADIGE REFERENDUM. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PCI RECEIVES ONLY 5 TO 6 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AMONG THE GERMAN ETHNICS, I.E., "ONLY THE VOTES OF THE MALCONTENTS," AND ASSERTED THAT MANY ITALIAN SPEAKING RESIDENTS WOULD BE IN FAVOR OF SELF-DETERMINATION. HE FURTHER CLAIMED THAT, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES HYPOTHESIZED, SICILY AND SARDINIA WOULD FOLLOW SUIT.

4. CORRIERE DELLA SERA ON MARCH 3 CARRIED THE COMMENTS OF VARIOUS PARTY SPOKESMEN. THE REGIONAL COMMUNIST SECRETARY GOUTHIER CALLED BRUGGER'S STATEMENTS "ABERRANT" AND DESCRIBED HIM AS HAVING TIES WITH "THE MOST EXTREMIST GROUPS IN BAVARIA AND WEST GERMANY." THE DC SPOKESMAN, GIORGIO PASQUALI, SAID "WE CANNOT SHARE ANY OF THE POINTS MADE BY BRUGGER." HE CALLED ALL TALK OF SEPARATISM AS BEING A GREAT DISSERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF ALTO ADIGE. THE SOCIALIST COMMENTATOR STRONGLY CONDEMNED AND REJECTED BRUGGER'S STATEMENTS. THE SVP SPOKESMAN, HUGO GAMPER, WAS MORE EQUIVOCAL. "WE DON'T SAY BRUGGER IS RIGHT," HE STATES, "BUT THE POSITIVE REACTIONS WHICH HIS DECLARATIONS HAVE PROVOKED ARE BEYOND QUESTION."

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5. COMMENT. BRUGGER IS PERHAPS THE MOST PROMINENT POLITICAL SPOKESMAN OF THE GERMAN MINORITY IN THE ALTO ADIGE REGION. ONE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE SPEAKS FOR A SIZEABLE PORTION OF HIS CONSTITUENCY ON THIS ISSUE (AN EMBASSY OFFICER WILL BE VISITING THE REGION SOON TO INQUIRE INTO THIS AND OTHER TOPICS). HOWEVER, THE LATENT DISSATISFACTIONS OF THE ETHNIC GERMANS IN THE REGION, GIVEN THEIR GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL

ORIENTATION, COULD WELL BE FANNED INTO MORE ACTIVE EXPRESSION
WERE THE COMMUNISTS TO ENTER THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. AN ANALAGOUS
DEVELOPMENT IN SICILY AND SARDINIA, AS ALLUDED TO BY BRUGGER,
IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE.VOLPE

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